



# OMEN

© WILL N VOLUME 49 ISSUE 4

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**Staff Box: (In order of appearance)**

**Simon:** Shout "MISTLEFOE!"

**Ida:** If you keep moving they won't kiss you.

**Will:** Something diabolical. After all, I am devilishly good looking.

**Chloe:** Don't look it in the eye or it will steal your life force.

**Front Cover:** Will Newhall & Chloe Omelchuck

**Back Cover:** Will Newhall

Submissions are due always, constantly, so submit forever. You can submit in any format (no PDFs please) by CD, Flash Drive, singing telegram, carrier pigeon, paper airplane, Fed-Ex, Pony Express, or email. Get your submissions to [omen@hampshire.edu](mailto:omen@hampshire.edu), the Omen Office or Chloe's mailbox (0369)

**Policy**

The Omen is a bimonthly publication that is the world's only example of the consistent application of a straightforward policy: we publish all signed submissions from members of the Hampshire community that are not libelous. Send us your impassioned yet poorly-thought-out rants, self-insertion fan fiction, MS Paint comics, and whiny emo poetry: we'll publish it all, and we're happy to do it. The Omen is about giving you a voice, no matter how little you deserve it. Since its founding in December of 1992 by Stephanie Cole, the Omen has hardly ever missed an issue, making it Hampshire's longest-running publication.

Your Omen submission (you're submitting right now, right?) might not be edited, and we can't promise any spellchecking either, so any horrendous mistakes are your fault, not ours. We do promise not to insert comical spelling mistakes in submissions to make you look foolish.

Your submission must include the name you use around campus: an open forum comes with a responsibility to take ownership of your views. (Note: Views expressed in the Omen do not necessarily reflect the views of the Omen editor, the Omen staff, or anyone, anywhere, living or dead.)

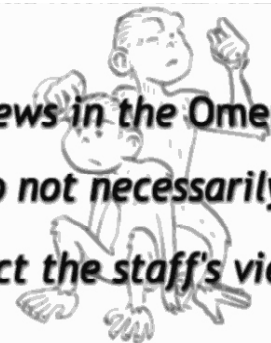
The Omen staff consists of whoever shows up for Omen layout, which usually takes place on alternate Thursday nights in the basement of Merrill in the company of a computer with an extremely inadequate monitor. You should come. We don't bite. You can find the Omen on other Thursdays in Saga, the post office, online at <http://expelallo.men>, and just about any other place we can find to put it.



**Views in the Omen (5)**

**Do not necessarily (7)**

**Reflect the staff's views (5)**



# EDITORIAL

Chloe Anne Omelchuck

Ida: Suggests a Surprised Pikachu meme  
to someone who doesn't keep up with memes

Chloe: I don't know this meme

Ida:



Chloe: Thanks Ida

Honestly though, Ida is the meme captain of the Omen, the Omen sheep definitely would have starved already if she weren't around.

Hello Omenites!

I wasn't feeling a super long editorial for this edition, so I thought I'd just showcase how illiterate I am in memes. I spend a lot of time on the internet, but zero time on twitter, reddit, instagram and wherever else memes live. I occasionally encounter a wild one in my youtube adventures, but they're few and far between (and generally very out of date).

On that note, I would like to take this opportunity to commemorate a very special occasion. Some of you may not know this, but I am a Div III student and I have been the Omen editrix since my second semester. It has been a wild ride, but there was one thing that I had not experienced, something which I desperately wanted to happen: a written response to an Omen article.

This may seem like a small thing to you, after all, you often see letters to the editor in newspapers like the New York Times. But in all the time I have been at the Omen it hasn't happened once. Until now. So thank you, Gabe, for not only reading the Omen, but going above and beyond and responding to it.

Remember, the Omen Loves you  
Please love us back :)

# SECTION SPEAK

## I'm Getting Paid to Write About Free Speech

by Ida Kao

The Omen's policy is to accept and publish any content that is not anonymous or libelous. Given Hampshire College's reputation in the wider world for being a heavily censored, politically correct bubble populated solely by snowflake SJW lefties, this commitment to free speech may come as a surprise to some. Indeed, this unique policy has not been replicated at any other college, university, or other institution that I have heard before. The decision by founder Stephanie Cole in 1992 that staff would wield no power over what is published means turns that power over to any member of the Hampshire community who wishes to express their opinion. I don't know Stephanie, but I can take a gander and say that there's a degree of humility in that decision. After all, what right does a self-selecting group of students have to selectively publish what the broader community has to say? Trump called the press the enemy of the people, but here, the press bows down to the people. The arrogance and presumption that the press knows better than the public is gone. The Omen is raw and unfiltered.

The Omen had been a flashpoint for controversy many, many years ago, and, according to Justin Philpot F97 in the 15th Anniversary edition, had members that were "considered cliquy and more than a little arrogant" and "reveled a little too much in being the center of so much negative attention." Current editrix Chloe Omelchuk is a bit of a shut-in that actively avoids drama and the recurring staff have dwindled down to four: Chloe, Will Cosgriff, Simon Fields, and me. A general shortage of content means that Chloe contributes quite a bit, while Simon, Will, and I have established separate ongoing series that means content will consistently be published. Lily Friedrich sends in updates on the soccer team, Simon writes his story, Will does whatever it is he wants to with his horoscopes. I write recommendations about random stuff I've seen on the internet and op-eds about

whatever it is I feel like. Despite this, I poke around and ask questions. There is a seemingly never-ending stream of problems and activists looking to fix those problems.

That may have been the reason I was amused to receive an email from the head of a philosophy program I participated in as a high school student offering \$150 to write an op-ed on "some topic related to academic speech, open discourse, or free expression." It seems only fitting to write this for The Omen. A hundred and fifty bucks is no chump change for a college student, and that's more than enough to encourage me to speak up about this sad state of affairs. Based on personal anecdotes and observations of myself and others, social media like Facebook and Instagram have overtaken slower print media as a way to express opinions. But there's something lost when your writing appears in a feed alongside cat videos and curated pictures of avocado toast. When words can be flung into the world with the tap of a smartphone screen, words lose their luster.

In a few classes or miscellaneous extracurricular activities I may cheerfully announce "Submit to The Omen!" and the group moves on to other matters. I say it because you, potential submitter, have power. People are more likely to read a longform piece in The Omen than on some random flyer on campus or a Facebook post. This is an avenue to have your voice heard that few others have access to. I, as well as other Omen staff, have no control over what you can say, because The Omen is not pretentious enough to declare themselves gatekeepers of speech at Hampshire. Yet no one is taking advantage of this power to express their beliefs. At this I am baffled. What are you all doing?

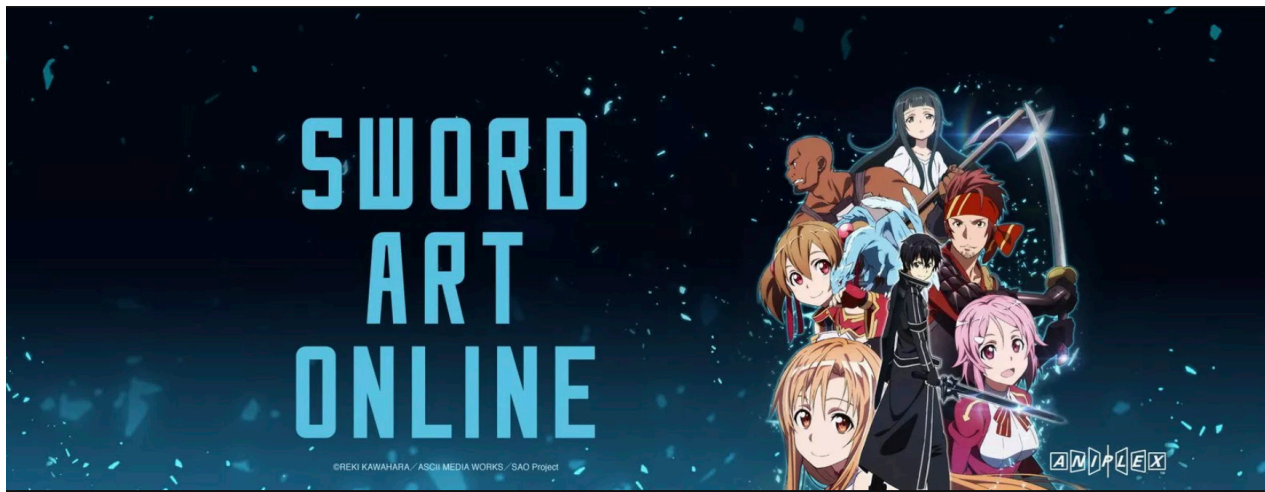
You are not submitting to *The Omen*, if I had to take a guess.



# Recommendation Series: Part 3

By Ida Kao

Hello, dear reader! I'm going to try something, and it may or may not work out well. I'm going to recommend something to you, one recommendation per issue. It's almost always going to be something accessible digitally and for free, but that's not guaranteed. It's typically going to be indie and not attached to an international conglomerate or be widely known, but that's also not guaranteed. While I would like to indulge myself and say that I have a taste for the obscure but still widely appealing, I doubt my recommendations will be completely unknown to the wider student body. If they are, then they probably don't have that broad of an appeal. So one or sometimes even both of those traits are not guaranteed in my recommendation.



<https://www.techquila.co.in/live-action-sword-art-online-series-sold-netflix/>

Anime: Sword Art Online

Caution: Spoilers abound.

'Tis the season for merriment, right? Which is why I'm giving you an un-recommendation. A really shitty pile of garbage to hate-watch while drowning your sorrow in eggnog and bourbon as your obnoxious family sucks the holiday joy out of the air around you. Something to distract you from the chintzy silver Christmas trees that sparkle in all their plastic mass-produced glory and the music blaring from every fast fashion chain at the mall. Sword Art Online is almost as appropriate for the season as Melania Trump's crimson Gilead trees. Just like the holidays, you think it'll be fun, but then you experience it for yourself and your expectations are dashed by reality. The first few episodes of Sword Art Online are promising, with a sinister air and an interesting world. I'm lazy so I'll let Wikipedia explain the premise for me:

In 2022, virtual reality massively multiplayer online role-playing game (VRMMORPG) called Sword Art Online (SAO) is released. With the NerveGear, a helmet that stimulates the user's five senses via their brain, players can experience and control their in-game characters with their minds. Both the game and the NerveGear were created by Akihiko Kayaba.

On November 6, 10,000 players log into SAO's mainframe cyberspace for the first time, only

to discover that they are unable to log out. Kayaba appears and tells the players that they must beat all 100 floors of Aincrad, a steel castle which is the setting of SAO if they wish to be free. Those who suffer in-game deaths or forcibly remove the NerveGear out-of-game will suffer real-life deaths.

The main character of the series, Kirito, was a beta tester for the game and therefore has a greater level of skill compared to totally new players. He meets and eventually starts dating someone named Asuna.

Yet somehow, Kirito manages to stretch the limit of what's possible to incredibly unrealistic levels. He's able to manipulate the source code of the game from inside the game, creating a completely new construct out of thin air by using his hacker skillz in order to save Yui, a young girl that is actually an artificial intelligence meant to monitor the psychological parameters of the players but somehow ends up being an adoptive daughter. The video game daughter of Kirito and Asuna, now stored in a teardrop shaped pendant because Kirito is awesome and can do literally anything, right? And this is just the first season!

Oh, and let's not forget the tentacle groping scene with Asuna during Season 2! Or the time Silica, a supporting character in the first season had an upskirt shot! Because, of course, we can't forget to sexualize every single one of the female characters in the series, all of whom happen to fall in love with Kirito. One of which included his cousin.

Sword Art Online had a promising start that went downhill real damn quick. Three episodes in quick. But if you're at Christmas dinner and your Trump loving, climate change denying relatives are being insufferable, know that there's even worse trash you could be listening to. And that trash is Sword Art Online.

## Dear Readers,

I wish to speak in defense of SAO! I agree with many of the points about this Anime's faults that Ida made. Much of the "technical aspects" of this anime are indeed unrealistic and downright strange. I will also agree that everything really goes downhill after the first Arc is over- which is not to be confused with Season 1. There are two arcs in season 1, and you should really stop watching after the first arc- anything after that is superfluous.

The weird harem that Kirito collects is, admittedly, weird, but not the strangest or creepiest that I've seen in an anime. There's some strange and shudder-worthy shit out there. The misogynistic attitude and fanservice make appearances, but there are also legitimate relationships between both male and female characters that go beyond love interests.

In any case, the big selling points on SAO were, for me, the fast-paced fight scenes (for me fight scenes are always a highlight of any anime). I appreciate the fast pace of the anime as a whole. The first arc takes place over the course of several years represented in a scant 14 episodes. I also like how it addressed the question of how real a virtual reality can be- which is a thread that is picked back up in the fifth arc which occurs during the second season (one that, if I have to be honest, is actually okay).

To be fair, my conditions for what makes a good story are stories that give me ideas for stories that I want to make, which doesn't necessarily mean that they have a good plot themselves. Overpowered characters also don't bother me, so...

My point is that, in the end, SAO is not the best anime you can watch, but it's also not the worst.

Chloe Omelchuck

## THE UNMENTIONABLE BOARD GAME

By Simon Fields

I was visiting some relatives in Boston over Thanksgiving break. It was far from being my first time at their house, and I was put up in the same room I stayed in the last few times. There was one pretty noticeable difference; an omission. You see, the previous time I was there, prominently displayed in a box there was a game called "Taboo". This time around, I noticed that it was missing from the shelf. What happened to it?

Well, the night before I left my cousin's house, I didn't know what I did with my own cell phone. I searched high and low, yet it refused to be found. The worst part was that I knew it had to be near the edge of the bed that was next to the wall because I saw it sitting there right before it went missing. Yet it wasn't sitting there anymore, and it wasn't directly underneath the bed either. I got off of the bed and looked under it again and again.

Fairly early in this process, I was scanning the floor under the bed, I saw a box, sitting close to the center. No, it couldn't be that Taboo box, I thought to myself. I reached for the box, low and behold it was! It said Taboo – wow, the word itself became so taboo they had to put it here!

After pondering whether or not this was for my benefit, and whether my relatives thought that I, or any of their other guests were just too immature to even handle seeing a board game with that loaded word, I went to sleep.

One last point I'll make, even if it's incredibly obvious: there is no place more fitting for a game labelled taboo than under the very center of a bed. And now, a subject I consider a little taboo for publication, the secret yearning in my soul –

## THE OPT OUT FANTASY

Trigger warning: suicidal thoughts

Someday I'll be able to break free of all cares and stresses in my life. I'll find a serene place within myself as I venture forth into the wilderness, the remote wilderness. You know, not the kind where hikers and masochistic joggers traverse – no the real untouched forests or better yet, the rainforests if I really pick a good spot.

Somewhere out there, I either find or build myself a cabin. Me building myself a cabin? I told you it's a fantasy – well I pull it off somehow. I also manage to have a car that runs on water or mushrooms or berries (the first is the most likely); a refrigerator stuffed to the brim with food, enough woodland soil and seeds nearby to grow a reliable food supply in the future. What else? A shelf full to the brim with books – too many books to read. A television set, a shelf full of VHS tapes, and okay, some DVDs too. A fireplace, a bed, a kitchen, okay fine a laundry machine and dryer, a bathroom with real running water! A solar panel on top of the cabin – oh, and a typewriter. And a record player and some records.

You know, nothing too fancy.

Oh and a cabinet full of medicines, and a landline phone with a disconnected number that I could dial to call my family and closest friends. Solicitors don't have the phone number. Fifteen people might have it, but a magical spell prevents their giving it to other people.

There's a lake nearby. Okay it's definitely a tropical rainforest. Why settle for coniferous woods when I could live in the jungle? Okay maybe I have a gun in case some jaguar tries to kill me, but I somehow train myself to be a vegetarian. To live off the fruits of the land.

Somehow I doubt I'd be nearly so eager to eat meat if I were the one doing the butchering or the skinning. Maybe I'd get over my squeamishness and remain an omnivore, or maybe I'll stop eating animals once I interact with the animals I'm eating...

Besides its a rainforest and there'll be plenty of great fruit there. This is the fantasy version after all. By the power of fiat I'm making it a ludicrously cozy existence. Speaking of fiat, let me tell you what there won't be: There won't be bureaucracy, — granted my comfort will depend on my work ethic — on my farming and firewood collection and solar panel maintenance — its a dystopian fantasy because in truth I probably wouldn't last out there.

But for the sake of argument I do. I live a long fruitful life out in the jungle; living alone but somehow feeling less lonely. The hermit's courage liberates the hermit from loneliness — it is in the midst of potential connection that fails to materialize that loneliness becomes salient. Aloneness can overlap with loneliness, but this doesn't necessarily happen — indeed these really are separate spheres.

Inner peace surely isn't lonely. Serenity and bookish curiosity and clicking clacking typewriters and freedom, autonomy — personal growth in the midst of nature in its densest overgrown most verdant form, surely this isn't lonely. It doesn't have to be; not in the midst of woodland critters or the jungle creatures I hang out with.. (As opposed to the dangerous ones). The landline works. Well okay, maybe it's a cell phone so as to prevent the need to obstruct the forests by constructing a landline.

Oh and I almost forgot — it's on some tract of land that is so thoroughly protected from encroachment that there's no need to fear civilization knocking on the door. The cabin's probably already been constructed; its

construction by my own hardy hands is both unlikely and impossible if the land is conserved.

But the cell phone is merely a phone. It isn't a camera or a calculator or a computer or an app container — it does one thing with a nice keypad from 1999 or 2003. You dial it, and it calls somebody.

This is the opt out fantasy. It may prove to be a terrible idea, don't try it in any forests near you. Definitely don't try it in any forest near me, because if I give it a try, by definition the opt out is remote. I mean, no offense by this — and I'd be happy if you visit me, but as long as it's in my cabin. Nobody gets to build any cabins nearby — I'm the only one who gets to degrade the wilderness with my human activity... At its very core it involves severing ties while breathing, loosing myself from the trivial annoyances of my privileged existence in civilization just enough to make my life truly miserable, in the humid climate of yellow fever and daunting odds — in an unkind wilderness I have very little experience dealing with, etc.

I don't know if I'd really enjoy living this life, but the very idea of it sustains me through every t that I must cross, through every dreary postmodern moment surrounded by whitewashed cinderblocks and blaring florescent overhead lights — through every millisecond of trivial despair that is brought on by small things I'm grateful for when I'm thinking more rationally — through all of it. What sustains me is the opt out fantasy, the cabin by a lake in the rainforest...

And now to meander back to reality.



# SECTION LIES

## **"I have guts to say"**

by Killian Dobroth

I have guts to say.  
Arms stretched longer than the clouds  
Hands to shape the future

I am, you are, she is,  
The machine.  
Beams gleam.  
The monstrosity eats the meek  
Leaves bleed, Streams steam.  
Under me  
Greys green, cage cleans,  
steal brains

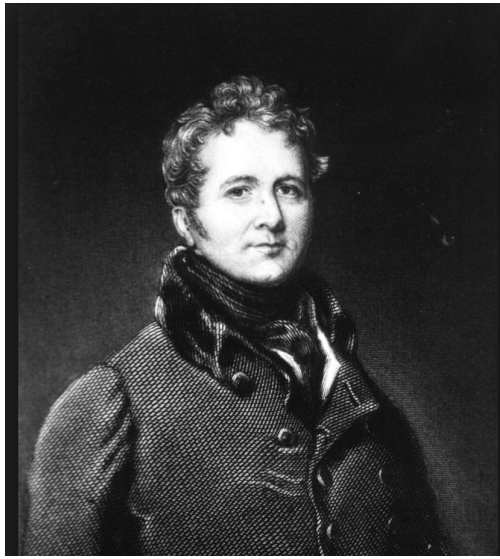
changed and rearranged. New lanes.  
Abandon  
names,  
claims,  
frames.  
Abandon fame

light the flame.  
See the change.  
night and day  
sun and moon  
flowers bloom.  
Resonating  
through towers, tombs

photograph of you  
in the month of June  
on the shelf,  
my only wealth.

Chapter 4: by Simon Fields

# The milliner's apprentice



<http://lovesatoundobject.blogspot.com/2011/10/glassblowers-breath.html>

Three babies, whisked away to the nursery to avoid exposure to a drunken outburst, before the mothers, fathers, physicians and nursemaids could hear the proclamations: "it's a girl! It's a boy!". While the mix-up was most unexpected, what follows so far isn't. Young Harry grows into a baronet, and a caddish one at that; young Mark grows into a glassblower and a red-faced one when he's in the glassworks.

Yet you may ask, what of the true heiress? Whatever became of Natalie, Natalie of Galton blood and Spencer name? One may also be curious about how the Spencer family survived its rather untimely exit from domestic service. These questions, and possibly others will be answered in the ensuing pages.

First with regards to the Spencer family itself. Hugh Spencer had hoped that he could save up enough capital to start up his own shop; as it turned out, Hugh and Susan only had enough saved up to tide the young vulnerable family over for a short period of time, in a lodging house down in the Seven Dials. The crooked building, standing on stilts kept as many as people in one room; living in squalor of unimaginable proportion. Two days after the birth of the twins, Susan calculated that between her own savings and those of her husband, the family could only afford these lodgings for another three months. There was no knowing what may come next. They certainly weren't going to get any references from the Galtons while pursuing another position in "the service." The rigidly regimented, dreary life of the workhouse? Borrowing and all the risk it entailed? Thieving to keep the wretched family alive? What was to become of the Spencers? One month after the birth and mix-up, Hugh's cousin Henry visited the family in their Seven Dials lodgings. Horrified by the conditions he witnessed, Henry decided to help his poorer relations.

"Good news cousin!" Henry said. "I've just been hired as the head at the Reform Club."

"I'm pleased to hear it," Hugh replied, trying not to look glumly annoyed that life was going so well for Henry.

"Well don't you see? I'll have you working there by Monday. But first you're family will join me

in my flat. You can't ruddy well look the part at Pall Mall while you're enmeshed in Seven Dials grime."

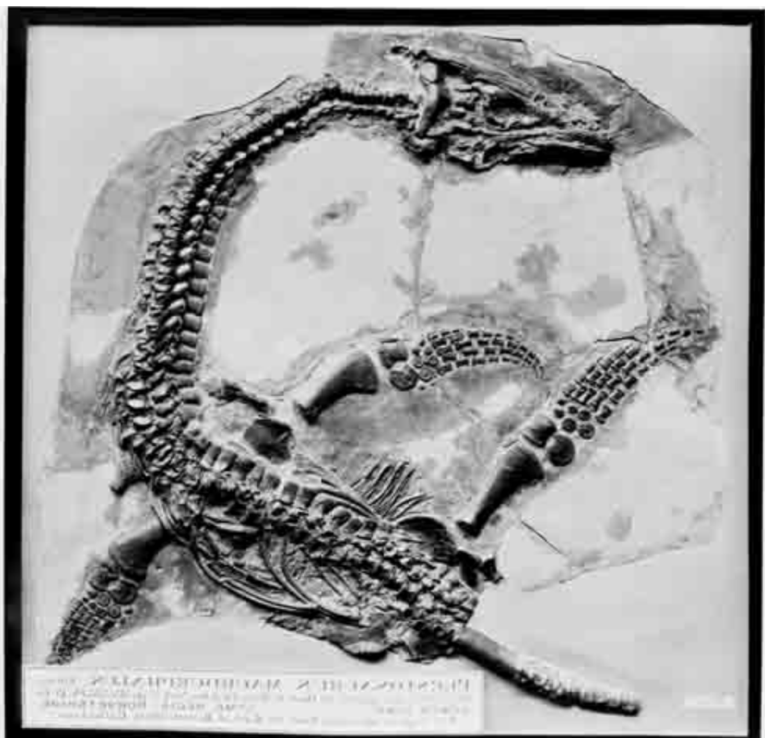
"Henry," Hugh says, with a spark of pride fighting a spark of opportunism, "I'm not sure if I can accept this – this charity."

"Odds fish Hugh. Charity? I need you at The Reform, I need at least one of the porters under me to be someone I can trust completely." And so it was that the troubles of the Spencers eased just as they were about to intensify. After spending a few months living in Hugh Spencer's flat, they were able to find a more suitable flat of their own. Susan wasn't only looking after the children and tending to the flat. She also worked as a piece-rate seamstress; since piece-rate seamstresses abounded in London Susan was never paid adequately for her endeavors.

From an early age, young Natalie's aspirations were grand, impractical, and incomprehensible to her parents, her brother and her peers. It wasn't just that she wanted to be a lady living in the lap of luxury, this was itself a highly implausible desire for her to have, yet it was a fairly commonplace thing to hopelessly long for. No, Natalie wanted more; she wanted to further human understanding of the World, the universe, the cosmos. She wanted to contribute in some meaningful way. By the time of her eleventh birthday, the young prodigy had caught a fever that was spreading amongst Victorian scholars; she wanted to find an answer that could unite disparate fields and disciplines; a unifying theory of history, philosophy, science, mathematics, etc. She wanted to find the meaning of life, the universe, and everything else in between.

I hesitate to leave you with the impression that Natalie's intellectual curiosity and aptitude was something that she inherited from her biological parents, or that her blue blood was what distinguished her from her brother. Indeed, it is possible that her more genteel genes made her more likely to imagine that she could live the life of a lady as opposed to the life of a piece-rate seamstress. Yet from whom would Natalie have inherited her prodigious mind? From Sir Charles? Hardly. Her mother Nellie was more sophisticated than Sir Charles, but when it came down to it, Nellie was no more mentally gifted than Susan.

What catalyzed Natalie's interest in the sciences was something else entirely. There was a middle aged woman living in the flat next door to Natalie; Sara Anning. Sara was not always a Cockney; she hailed from Lyme Regis, Dorset – located in the southwestern seaside countryside. Sara Anning had a great deal of admiration for her relative Mary, and was eager to tell young Natalie her cousin's story. Mary Anning discovered numerous fossils off of the Dorset Coast and could be credited with pioneering much of what we now know of paleontology. She only received partial recognition for her work while she was alive (much of it was stolen by men), yet Mary quickly became Natalie's heroine. Natalie



[http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/famouspeople/mary\\_anning/teachers\\_resources.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/famouspeople/mary_anning/teachers_resources.shtml)

began to look up to Mary Anning, and strove to emulate her. Though there were no posters of Mary Anning that Natalie could post up in her room, if such posters existed, Natalie most certainly would've plastered at least one of her walls with them.

Hugh and Susan Spencer did the best that they could for their children. In 1848 the crowns of Europe were quaking, and the Chartists of Britain were reaching their peak of power. At around the same time, Natalie and Mark were a few months away from celebrating their first full decade of life in London, the most precarious decade they'd live through – the hungry forties. Yet some future hunger may well have been preempted by two friendships forged by their parents; one with a journeyman glassblower – Elias Turner and the other with a milliner – Kate Finchon.

Mark liked the idea of becoming a glassblower. There was a certain magical quality to the whole process of blowing glass; there was still a craftsmanship involved that Mark wouldn't have found in other more factory like conditions. What's more, glassblowers were amongst the better paid manual workers, at 110 pounds a year, glassblowers made more than some clerks. Natalie was much less enthusiastic about the idea of learning the milliner's trade. Oh, she liked hats and bonnets as much as the next girl, but she repeatedly reminded her parents that she really wanted to be an astronomer.

"Aye, I know you do Natalie, but looking up through billowy smog at the heavens isn't going to put food on thy plate, nor will it keep you away from the, the work 'ouse. Believe me my girl, you'd much rather spend your time making bonnets," Susan said this, and it wasn't for the first time. Nor was it the fifth.

Though Natalie eventually relented, and began her apprenticeship with Kate Finchon on her twelfth birthday, she was still determined to, well we might say "moonlight" by literally gazing at moon and starlight, and making detailed observations with eyes unaided by telescopes. Natalie also had a voracious appetite for books, and she was constantly trying to get ahold of one dusty tract or another.

Mark was not Natalie's only sibling. In 1842 Susan gave birth to Natalie's sister Susie, named for her mother. When Susie was very young, Natalie, who was only around four at the time, was often expected to look after her sister. By the time that Susie was two, she and Natalie began to view each other as rival siblings. There was a growing level of discord betwixt them for the following five years. Mark wasn't a steady ally to either sister, sometimes taking one side, and sometimes the other.

These spats came to an end in 1849. Natalie was eleven by then, and Susie was seven. It seemed that, in direct proportion to the intensity of their rows, a new bond of sisterly peace and understanding was springing up. This bond only grew as the two girls grew older, as they became harder and harder to separate; more and more likely to finish each other's sentences. Five sweet years followed, but alas fate wouldn't let things be as they ought. When Susie came down with the cholera, and when the family didn't have the means to even find a doctor to attend to the poor child, everyone was frightened, Natalie chiefly so. Susie's death should never have happened at such a childish age, and in different conditions it may have been avoided.



# Welcome to the Reverse Advice Column!

(Where you give US advice!)

submitted by Will Newhall

**Question:** Which Haircut Should I Get?

**Answer us by Email:**

**[noselfrespect2018@gmail.com](mailto:noselfrespect2018@gmail.com)**

**[omen@hampshire.edu](mailto:omen@hampshire.edu)**

A) The Caesar



B) The Kennedy



C) The Taper Fade Haircut



D) The Classic "My Dog Does My Hair" Cut



E) The Literal Rat Tail



F) The "Rat? How's about a Lizard?" Cut





# LETTER to the OMEN

FROM GABE POFCHER (IN RESPONSE TO ISSUE 49.3 "RADICALIZATION")

**DON'T KIDNAP BERNIE**  
PLEASE—HE IS MY SENATOR  
AND I WOULD MISS HIM.

## RESPONSE FROM EDITRIX

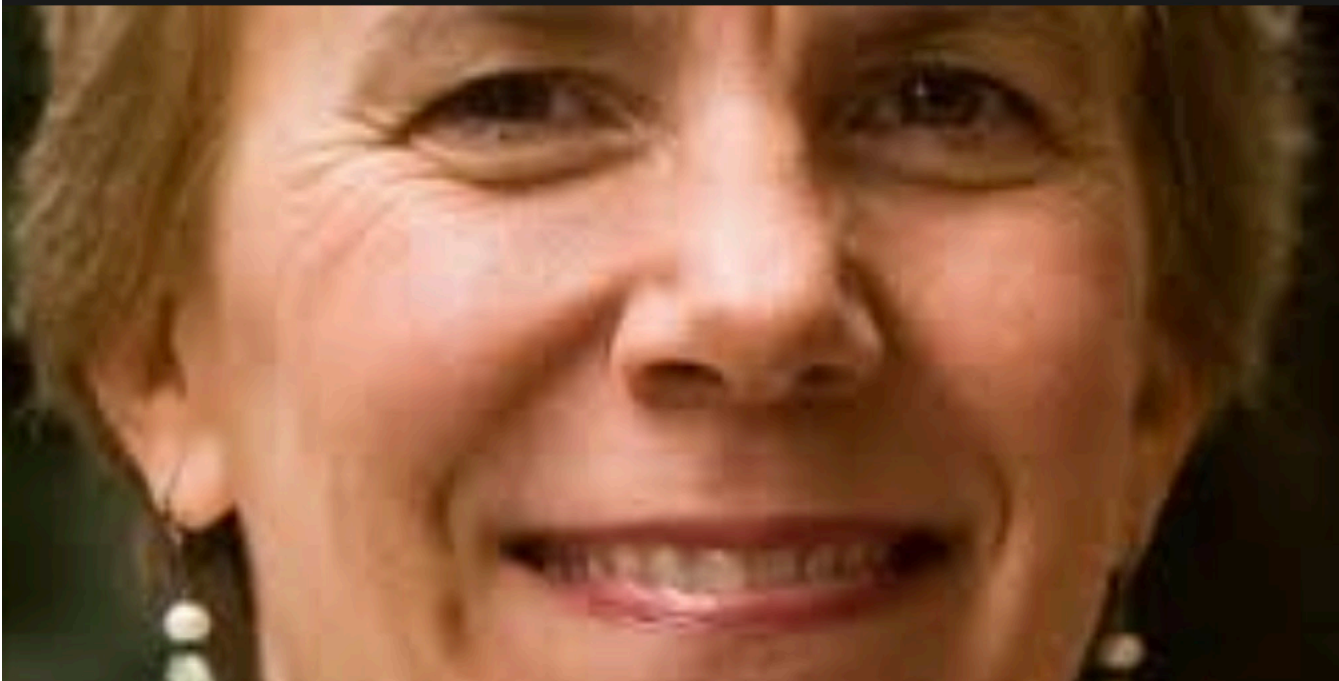
I understand your concern, but just think of the good that he could do as our figurehead and idol. The wider world will undoubtedly benefit from the process of Hampshire colonialism and the eventual establishment of the Hampshire commonwealth. We'd return him to you... eventually.

Besides, Bern belongs in the Kern! Its practically fate.  
P.S. Nice haiku!

**Mim: "What's our relevance to the world right now?"**

**Omen: We shall conquer the other colleges and sacrifice sheep in the name of Bernie!**

**Mim:**



^Mim meme by Chloe Omelchuck

<https://coed.com/2018/04/17/miriam-nelson-hampshire-college-president-mim/>

<https://www.gazettenet.com/Hampshire-College-s-new-president-takes-in-first-months-on-campus-20919866>



# AN ODE TO SAGA

## A found poem

by Sarita Shera

Using *traditional* techniques  
Promoting sustainable agriculture  
Working towards a more humane food system  
**BITE** into a more healthy lifestyle  
Made with 100% **RECYCLED** material  
Save the environment, one napkin at a time



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY STUART!!!!!!!

Dear Stuart of Omaha, NE,

Today, October 12, 2018, is my birthday. My 18th birthday, to be exact, which is kind of extra special since now I am allowed to buy cigarettes and be charged as an adult if I commit a crime. Now I am free to completely fuck up my life in whichever way I wish, and since it's legal, the world will not try and shield me from the consequences. But I can vote! That's just about the only upside I can think of. I have no idea how old you are, but I do know your birthday is on January 6, which is a while away. And now all the readers of this particular issue of The Omen know it too.

You must be wondering what is going on, and the readers of The Omen must also be thinking the same thing.

So, let's go through this chronologically. On January 6, 2017, I was browsing Reddit. Specifically, I was on the homepage, which is a customized page that consists of posts solely from subreddits I have subscribed to. I encountered a post ([https://www.reddit.com/r/InternetIsBeautiful/comments/5mgjnt/website\\_for\\_google\\_searches\\_that\\_gives\\_you\\_the/](https://www.reddit.com/r/InternetIsBeautiful/comments/5mgjnt/website_for_google_searches_that_gives_you_the/)) from the r/InternetIsBeautiful subreddit, which featured a link to <https://mysterysear.ch/>, a website that shows you the Google Search results for what the previous person searched. After doing this multiple times, getting search results ranging from "underage boobies" to "how to kill someone" in an effort to put me on an FBI watchlist, I got a surprisingly wholesome search that did not turn up any results. It said:

"It's my friend Stuart's birthday. Please leave him a voicemail at 402-XXX-XXXX pretending to be his friend."

I did not leave you a voicemail, as you already know. Omen readers will need to look at the attached screenshots to see what I said, because I'm lazy and

will not transcribe it. I am an awkward person who has little to say that's of interest, so needless to say that conversation died pretty quickly.

It wasn't until January 16th, 2018 that I remembered the random dude on the internet I texted that one time over Winter Break. Scrolling through a years worth of group chats and one-on-one conversations to find this took a little bit, but no matter how quickly my thumbs could move I was eight days too late.

Which is why I'm doing this now. In order to make up for that stilted, horrendously awkward conversation I will immortalize you! People will know your (first) name and celebrate the day of your birth! Unfortunately, with my limited scope of influence, there isn't much I can do. I can't cast a bronze plaque with "Stuart of Omaha, Nebraska" and it would just be silly without your last name on there. So the best I can do is write about this in The Omen, Hampshire College's longest running, and currently the only, publication. The Omen editrix (the gender neutral term for editor-in-chief, although I have qualms with that since -trix is feminine and -trum is the true gender neutral term) Chloe likes to call The Omen a magazine because we accept anything sent to [omen@hampshire.edu](mailto:omen@hampshire.edu), whether those are articles, creative writing, comics, or bad erotica. I like to be non committal and call it a periodical, but that's just me. In face, my inability to commit means that while I'm addressing this letter to you, it also requires exposition and explanation so that the Omen readers will understand what's happening. My dual audience of you on one hand and the generic Hampshire College student means that I've got to do a bit of a balancing act. But I will not allow this to hold me back from asking Omen readers to remember this.

So, you 200 or less Omen readers. Read this and hold it in your hearts forevermore! The sixth day of January is the day a young man by the name of Stuart (Who care about his last name? I sure don't.) was born! A proud resident of Omaha, Nebraska, he regularly rides

Tue, Jan 16, 3:20 PM

his trusty cow to school!! And know that a random decision to dick around on the internet can lead to strange pieces of writing such as these.

Best wishes,  
Ida Kao

Text Message  
Jan 6, 2017, 7:57 PM

Yo Stuart

Happy Birthday dude!



Haha thank you very much!

No problem. Tell your buddy spamming the Mystery Search on u/InternetisBeautiful he's a great friend

Absolutely no idea who it is lol is this something that people do? Never heard of it

Nah, I don't think it's too common. Since it's on Reddit it may send some trolls your way though.

Hahaha I'm quite used to trolls

Good for you. :) Figured out who was messaging strangers on the internet yet?

Yeah he posted on my wall lol

Nice! Tell him u/ [redacted] thinks he's a great person.

Lol he is

Oh no I missed your birthday this year!!!! Sorry random stranger!

Oh right Stuart

Happy 10 days late birthday! Your friend is still super awesome!

Lol thank you who's this?

There was a program? Website? That was linked to on Reddit last that shows what the last person searched in the search bar. Your friend spammed the thing to get random internet strangers to wish you a happy birthday

Lmao ohh yeah that was last year haha

Thus, I am a random internet stranger from Reddit here to wish you a happy birthday a year and ten days later

Lolol where are you from?

Virgini

Virginia

Where are you from?

Omaha, NE!

Wow I know absolutely nothing about Nebraska

What's it like? It's flat right?

We ride cows to school lol

That sounds fun

Maybe not when it's cold



## Ye Olde Memes: submitted by Simon Fields





# SECTION HATE

## THE SILENCE OF THE BUGS:

### A RESPONSE TO THE NEW YORK TIMES OP-ED

BY CHLOE OMELCHUCK

*"In Britain, the news report about car-insect collisions was based on a study that relied on data from volunteers who monitored gridlike "splat-o-meters" on their license plates. We need more of this sort of scientist-directed crowdsourcing. Citizen scientists and a few field-research-oriented college communities like my own at Paul Smith's College in the Adirondacks of New York are turning their yards, gardens, lakes and forests into long-term monitoring stations. Online clearinghouses like iNaturalist, Budburst and the North American Breeding Bird Survey compile and archive field data for others to use, and show that many species are changing their ranges and migration habits in response to climate change.*

*In the United States, research scientists associated with a network of more than two dozen long-term ecological monitoring centers have also been conducting more detailed field research for several decades. But these efforts are still not enough to keep track of a rapidly changing world. We need new crops of professionals trained in field biology and ecology to focus on important but less charismatic or commercially valued creatures than songbirds and honeybees.*

*In 1996, an editorial in Conservation Biology warned that "naturalists are dying off," and asked: "Will the next generation of conservation biologists be nothing but a bunch of computer nerds with no firsthand knowledge of natural history?"*

*Two decades later, we are beginning to realize how lucky we are that dedicated expert and amateur naturalists remain to observe and record the distinctive flash of a firefly or the soft clatter of dragonfly wings. But we need more of them, and soon."*

This is a snippet of an op-ed which appeared in the New York Times May 26, 2018. The article, written by Curt Stager, a professor of Natural Sciences broadly discussed many of the changes to insect communities in both abundance and diversity that have been discovered. However, it also emphasized just how little data there is on most insect communities in most habitats in most parts of the world. Indeed, there has been very little work in what ecologists and field biologists call 'natural history' in recent years. As you can see from the snippet above, Stager discusses the need for more of this type of work- the need for scientists to be trained in this kind of work- and the need for more LTERs (Long term ecological research sites) in order to collect much-needed natural history data. This made me really angry, here's why.

As an undergraduate in the field of ecology, I fully support the overall message of Stager's article. I agree with the conclusions that he draws about the decline of global insect communities and the lack of research on less charismatic species. My own Div III focuses on insect communities and the importance of studying insects is generally lost on most people I try to explain my Div to. The simple answer is that knowing about these less charismatic communities of organisms- soil microorganisms, insects, plants, plankton, benthic (bottom-of the ocean/pond) organisms- forms a picture of the base of a larger food chain that supports higher forms of life. Furthermore, it's much easier to collect data on these organisms than larger creatures like deer, fish, pandas, etc. because they're much easier to find and more plentiful (and therefore more expendable for experiments which require, or result in, a less-alive specimen).

In fact, my Div isn't even focused on some complex question like how do insect communities impact their predators? Or even how do insect communities impact their ecosystem? While these are questions that I am indeed keeping in mind for my Div, the base of it the exact kind of research that Stager claims we need more of; natural history. I ask the 'simple' question: what kinds of insects can I find in this one ecosystem and how many of them are there? In order to answer the more complex questions that I mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph this is the basic research that we need to know. And it was hard. Collecting just 100 samples from the field for my Div was the work of the equivalent to a week of 8-10 hour days. Not to mention the additional hundreds of hours I spent (and am still spending) actually identifying all the insects I collected. And this is the basis of what makes me so angry about this article.

Stager's plea for more scientists to do natural science make it seem as if young scientists like me are no longer getting an education in natural science. He makes it seem as if we think ourselves somehow above this kind of exhausting and time-consuming field work. I obviously cannot speak for all undergraduate scientists out there, but I actually love this kind of work. If I could do natural history studies for the next ten years I would be a happy camper. The reality is that no undergraduate ecologist or biologist aspires to do solely natural history work because you can't really make a living doing it (at least not without a masters).

For example, the ecosystem that I collected my insects from are abandoned Cranberry bogs on Cape Cod. The reason I had to do the basic research on abandoned Cranberry bogs is because there is little to no published research on insect communities in these ecosystems. For that matter, there is little to no research on insect communities in natural bogs in the New England area. In fact, the overwhelming majority of research on insect communities in any kind of bog in the New England area has been conducted with funding from the Cranberry industry on what kinds of pests occur in Cranberry bogs and different ways of combating them. And there it is- the research happens where the money is.

Stegler talks about the efficacy of volunteer groups doing natural history and how they must rely on them to do the research. To be fair, there's a lot of field work that doesn't have to be done by a trained ecologist/biologist. Volunteers can be a great resource, but scientific studies do need to be designed and overseen by a scientist. There aren't that many sources of funding out there to pay scientists to do that. Most large natural history studies are headed by a small group of researchers

that have a certain amount of grant money used for equipment, supplies and graduate students. The researcher's own wages are often being paid by some sort of larger organization (a college, university, company, research organization, etc.) and they then augment their staff with additional volunteers- either non-scientists or unpaid undergraduates. When I did my own research I was doing a semester program- so I was actually paying to do the research! The fact is, it is impossible to gather the kind of basic information that Stegler is requesting without any funding to do so. The money simply isn't there, and what money is there is barely enough to live on. And that's why, within the next five years I and many graduated undergrads like me will go to grad school and stop doing natural history research because we've moved on to a livable pay grade. What I hate so much about Stegler's article is its assertion that young scientists like me were never trained to do this kind of work and are just ignorant of how important it is. It's the implication that we're entitled brats for wanting to live free of crippling student debt and with a certain level of comfort. As if we should be willing to work for what amounts to minimum wage for the rest of our lives even with an undergraduate degree.

Unfortunately this attitude is what creates a lack of information about the natural world. So, before you blame ecologists (and other scientists) for being alarmists for saying things like "we're not certain, but we're afraid that..." keep in mind that you would never expect a doctor to be able to tell you what a drug does without testing it first and know that's exactly what you're asking us to do. Just like doctors want to understand the body, ecologists like me want to know why ecosystems function the way they do. Many, many people are well-paid to test the effects that drugs have on the body before we allow them to be used. No one is paid to test the effects of adding chemicals and excess elements to ecosystems before we do it. We don't expect doctors to rely on volunteers and "crowd sourcing" to get accurate data on drugs. Why do we expect other scientists to do so? The reason our environment is so fucked isn't so much because we don't care what we're doing, it's because we've never care enough to find out.

Link to the New York Times Op-ed: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/26/opinion/sunday/insects-bugs-naturalists-scientists.html>



Two examples of the 161 species of insects that can be found 180 square meters of abandoned cranberry bog. That's an area slightly smaller than a singles tennis court.

# Humorous Hampshire Horoscope: Jolly Jolly Christmas!

by Will Newhall

## Aries

Make sure to put literal hurdles in front of the Christmas tree this holiday season. That way everyone will get a great workout that they wouldn't otherwise be able to get in a capitalist society.

## Taurus

Be very possessive of your presents. You don't know what your nephews will do with them. Remember to crouch over them and quote Golem by saying "MY PRECIOUS!"

## Gemini

Be very gentle and affectionate with the Elf in the Shelf this month. He needs it. Poor Elfie.

## Cancer

Cling to the knowledge that Christmas has pagan origins. Remind your Christian relatives of this over and over again.

## Leo

Be extra generous this month and give everyone an extra piece of coal. They definitely worked for it.

## Virgo

Be very loyal to your ideals this holiday season. Especially to the Elf on the Shelf. He needs a friend.

## Libra

If your mother doesn't give you the present that you wanted then be diplomatic about it by not talking to her for 25 years.

## Scorpio

You will bravely storm into the Christmas lounge and demand to see your presents one day early. If your family doesn't allow it scream and jump up and down like a little child. It worked when you were five, it'll work again won't it?

## Sagittarius

You will go into an alley with a lance and a jousting uniform and yell "Merry Hanukah!" to the next stranger. That way more people will think you're delusional.

## Capricorn

Put your family in one place. Then draw a picture of every relative except the ones that you hate. Instead of drawing their face draw a condescending stocking. Submit it to the Omen.

## Aquarius

When someone tries to kiss you under the mistletoe, punch them in the face while you yell "MISTLEFOE!!"

## Pisces

Be very intuitive with your gift giving this month. Like a light bulb. Give them a red lightbulb. Nose shaped. Like Rudolph. Rudolph the Red Nose Shaped Lamp. It was a very shiny lamp!

# The Actual Hampshire Horoscope

Also by Will Newhall

## **Aries**

Wear comfortable clothes and take leadership roles this month. It will benefit you.

## **Taurus**

Be irresponsible this month! You deserve it.

## **Gemini**

You need to stop caring so much about other and care more about others.

## **Cancer**

Make sure to persuade yourself more than you persuade others.

## **Leo**

Be very passionate and loving this month.

## **Virgo**

Analyze your own life and it'll help you progress further in it.

## **Libra**

If diplomacy is your main worry, don't worry. Everything will be fine.

## **Scorpio**

Your passion will lead you closer to your destiny.

## **Sagittarius**

Your idealism will really help you this month.

## **Capricorn**

Your responsibility will only increase this month.

## **Aquarius**

You will progress this month.

## **Pisces**

Your musical talents will be beneficial this month.





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